

Town of North Smithfield Planning Board

Kendall Dean School, 83 Green Street

Thursday, June 2, 2011, 7:00 PM

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

1. Roll Call

Present: Chair Scott Gibbs, Dean Naylor, Gene Simone, Alex Biliouris, Dr. Lucien Benoit, Art Bassett. Absent: Joe Cardello. Also present was Town Planner Bob Ericson.

2. Approval of Minutes: May 19, 2011

Mr. Simone made a motion to approve the minutes of May 19, 2011 without changes. Mr. Biliouris seconded the motion, with all in favor.

3. Community Development Block Grant: Review and approval of 2011 application

Mr. Ericson presented the town's 2011 Community Development Block Grant application. He stated that the application is similar to the requests made in 2010. The requests included in the grant application are:

\$34,000 for low and moderate income (LMI) home repairs, including

sewer connections (distributed as grants and loans to town residents)

\$58,000 for a replacement senior bus

\$8,250 for a sewer connection and new boiler for Heritage Hall

\$3,000 for the Affordable Housing Land Trust based in Providence

This year, the application process also offers the opportunity to submit a supplemental request for a specific LMI project. The application includes a supplemental request for \$325,000 toward Marshfield Commons site acquisition.

The Board discussed the requests. Mr. Ericson stated that the senior bus is mainly used by the residents of The Meadows and without the grant, the program will probably not continue. The Chair suggested contacting the St. Antoine residence to try to pool resources and link the services.

Mr. Ericson also explained to the Board that non-profits cannot apply directly for the grants; they must apply through the town. Heritage Hall would be used as a museum in the future if Slatersville becomes part of a National Park. The Affordable Housing Land Trust asks many towns to apply for the grant money each year.

The Board discussed the supplemental request for Marshfield Commons site acquisition. They asked that such requests be presented to the Board members during the planning process. Mr.

Ericson stated that the affordable housing is a specific project and therefore eligible to receive the money. It is not money that would be available to the Town on its own.

The Chair stated that he would like the money to benefit the whole town, and that NeighborWorks should have been more forthcoming during the public hearings. The other Board members agreed that the money seems to benefit the developer rather than the tenants of the project. Mr. Ericson noted that NeighborWorks is a non-profit that needs to seek money wherever it is available. In response to the Board's question, Mr. Ericson stated that they did not ask to be included in the CDBG grant until after the Board approved the Comprehensive Permit, but he was not surprised that they did ask.

Dr. Benoit asked if the Planning Board had any say in what is included in the grant application. Mr. Ericson explained that the Board is reviewing the application for conformity with the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Bassett asked if the Town Council can set stipulations on the grant money, but Mr. Ericson said they cannot.

Mr. Biliouris made a motion to forward the grant application to the Town Council with the statement that the Planning Board has reviewed the proposal and determined that the requests are not in conflict with the town's Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Simone seconded the motion, with all in favor.

4. Land Development and Subdivision Regulations: Review of proposed changes

The Board discussed cistern regulations. Mr. Ericson has spoken with Fire Marshal Gartland about the review process. Placement and cistern requirements have generally been based on the professional judgment of the fire marshal. Revised specifications based on national standards and cost-effectiveness suggest revising the regulations to say that a cistern may be required for developments of three or more dwelling units. Dr. Benoit suggested changing the wording to “shall be required.” The Chair agreed that this wording still leaves room for developers to request a waiver. The Chair also stated that a Technical Review Committee should have the fire marshal involved and in that case, the requests will be fully vetted before coming before the Board.

The Board also discussed section 17.3 and whether it is necessary to go through a complete Development Plan Review (DPR) and all three stages of the review, including public hearing when a plan is modified with only minimal changes. Mr. Ericson asked if the Board would be amenable to waiving redundant public hearings. He stated that plans are usually maxed out when submitted to the DEM. If the plan is changed but matches the footprint (or within 10%) of that approved by DEM, the redundant hearings could be waived and the steps merged. He added that DPR is not for residential plans, even if the building is more than 5,000 square feet. He is still waiting for Mr.

Nadeau's written opinion on this. The Board agreed that the applicant should be encouraged to seek a waiver in such circumstances.

5. Planning Update: Review of current events

Mr. Ericson informed the Board that Dowling Village will be coming back with a modification of some of the buildings on the plan, and he will discuss it with the Board. There will be a net reduction of 11,000 sq. ft. and reduction of parking spaces.

Mr. Ericson told the Board that the Planning Department has hired an intern, Nikki Sacha, who will be working primarily on FEMA and stormwater management projects for 10-12 weeks this summer.

Dr. Benoit made a motion to adjourn at 8:06 pm. Mr. Simone seconded the motion, with all in favor.